

# Immodesty – Biblical Principles

## Introduction

Colossians 3:17 And **whatever you do in word or deed**, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

1. **Christians young and old find the subject of modest apparel a difficult subject to discuss objectively.**
2. **Yet, this is a Bible subject, and therefore we must give our reverent and obedient attention to it.**
  - A. **We want to ensure that we are in fact teaching and adhering to the whole counsel of God.**

## Definition of Words

1. **“Immodest” has many connotations. Several basic English words must be distinguished which include the following:**
  - A. **Immodest** – having an immoderate estimate of one’s self; having a forward nature; having a disregard for decencies of behavior or dress.
    - 1) **Synonyms: arrogant, proud, bold, unreserved, unrestrained, shameless, unchaste**

1 Timothy 2:9 in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,

**B. Lascivious – lewd, wanton, inciting to lust.**

- 1) **Lewdness (NKJV) – lacking moral discipline or sexual restraint.**
- 2) **Synonyms: suggestive.**

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, **lewdness**, (see also Ephesians 4:17-19; 1 Peter 4:3)

**C. Obscene – offensive, suggesting impure ideas. On “purity,” the opposite quality.**

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — **meditate on these things**.

1 John 3:3 And everyone who has this hope in Him **purifies himself, just as He is pure**.

**D. Unbecoming – beneath the standard implied by one’s character or position.**

- 1) **Synonyms: improper, inappropriate, not fitting.**

1 Timothy 2:10 but, **which is proper for women professing godliness**, with good works.

Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, **to do those things which are not fitting**; (see also Ephesians 5:4)

**E. Indecent – not conformed to recognized standards of propriety; to be fitting, suitable, acceptable.**

- 1) **Synonyms: indelicate, unseemly, disgraceful.**

Romans 12:17 Repay no one evil for evil. **Have regard for good things in the sight of all men**.

2 Corinthians 8:21 **providing honorable things**, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. (see also 1 Peter 2:12)

## Understanding Bible Principles

### 1. It is shameful to expose one's nakedness.

#### A. When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost their childlike innocence.

1) Clothing was needed to cover their nakedness.  
**Genesis 3:7, 10-11, 21**

2) We should note that the Lord put more clothes on them than they had put on themselves!

#### B. It is shameful to expose or draw attention to the private parts of the body.

Isaiah 47:1-3 "Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called Tender and delicate. Take the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, Take off the skirt, Uncover the thigh, Pass through the rivers. **Your nakedness shall be uncovered, Yes, your shame will be seen**; I will take vengeance, And I will not arbitrate with a man."

1 Corinthians 12:23-24 And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, **on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty**, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, **having given greater honor to that part which lacks it**, (see also *Isaiah 3:16-17; Luke 8:26-35; Rev 3:17-18*)

#### C. One can be shamefully "naked" in the biblical sense, without being totally nude.

Job 22:6 For you have taken pledges from your brother for no reason, And **stripped the naked of their clothing**.

James 2:15-16 If a brother or sister **is naked** and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you **do not give them the things which are needed for the body**, what does it profit? (see also *Matthew 25:36, 43; Isaiah 20:2-4*)

## 2. Lasciviousness destroys others as well as one's self.

### A. Galatians 5:19-21

- 1) "Lasciviousness" ("lewdness" – NKJV); lustfulness, sensuality; that which promotes lewd emotions and lustful desires.

Ephesians 4:19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

1 Peter 4:3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles — when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

Romans 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

### B. Matthew 5:27-30

- 1) There is a two-fold responsibility here:

- a. The man is responsible to guard his mind from impurity

2 Peter 2:14 having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. (see also *Philippians 4:8*)

- b. The woman is to help prevent the lewd stare.

- 2) It is inconsistent for a woman to dress provocatively and then resent being leered at by men.
- 3) Though lust is inexcusable on the man's part, if the woman, by her apparel or otherwise, has encouraged it, she shares in the guilt.
- 4) Consider these possible examples of mutual guilt:  
**2 Samuel 11:1-5**  
*(see also Genesis 9:20-27; 38:12-26; Proverbs 7:6-27)*

### 3. The Christian's clothing must be consistent with godliness.

#### A. Proverbs 7:6-27

1) This woman's attire fit her lustful intent.

#### B. 1 Timothy 2:9-10

1) "Adorn" – to put in order; to arrange, to ornament.

a. Adornment is not condemned, but it involves orderliness.

Proverbs 31:22 She makes tapestry for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple.

2) "In modest apparel" – in seemly guise.

a. orderly, well arranged, decent, modest.

3) "Propriety" – modesty; reverence; respect.  
"Shamefacedness" KJV; "Shamefastness" ASV

Hebrews 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, **let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.**

a. Propriety involves a sense of shame, a moral abhorrence of doing anything disgraceful, an inner reserve. Shamefast – held fast or firm by a sense of shame.

b. Since it is humility and shame that prompt the wearing of modest apparel, it is no wonder immodesty is so widespread in our day.

- Today, too few women have a sense of shame or embarrassment.
- Blushing is almost a lost ability when it comes to clothing, or a lack of it!

- 4) **“Moderation” – soundness of mind; self-control, sobriety, discretion.**
  - a. **Sensibility, discreetness, prudence, serious-mindedness, self-restraint.**
  - b. **Godliness produces a reserved dignity, a discreet control over the passions, a voluntary self-government – not merely the external restraint of social taboo.**
  
- 5) **“Not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing.”**
  - a. **“Costly” – very expensive, extravagantly costly.**
  - b. **Excess, rather than the adornment, are condemned here.**
  - c. **The idea is not that outward adornment is wrong, but that, in comparison to the adorning of the inner person by good works, it is of lower priority and lesser importance.**
    - **For the Christian, this inner adorning should be a matter of much greater concern – it is obviously of more fundamental significance than the other.**
  
- 6) **“Proper” – fitting, seemly, suitable, becoming**

Ephesians 5:3 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, **let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;**

- 7) **“Professing godliness” – laying a claim to being reverent.**

**C. 1 Peter 3:3-4**

- 1) **Note that Peter emphasizes in verses 1-2 the impressiveness of chaste conduct.**
- 2) **“The hidden person of the heart” – hidden, inner, concealed.**
- 3) **“Incorruptible” – imperishable, unfading, lasting, ageless.**
- 4) **“Gentle” – meek, mild.**
- 5) **“Quiet” – tranquil, serene, calm, peaceful.**
- 6) **Contrast the “gentle and quiet spirit” with the bold, assertive impudence fashionable among many women today. Arrogant pushiness is the stock-in-trade of the feminist movement.**
- 7) **The secret of a woman’s true beauty is inside her.**

Proverbs 11:22 As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, So is a lovely woman who lacks discretion.

- a. **Outward adorning, even within proper limits, is relatively meaningless next to the adorning of the heart and character!**

## Conclusion

1. **Character and conduct are interrelated.**
  - A. **Apparel is both a thermometer and a thermostat to character, i.e. it not only helps to indicate what one's character is, it also helps determine what it will become.**
  - B. **Modesty and immodesty are primarily characteristics of the person, and only secondarily of clothing.**
    - 1) **This does not mean "any clothing a modest person wears is acceptable."**
    - 2) **It does mean that the inwardly modest person will express that outwardly in decisions made about clothing. No specific dress code will be needed for this person, for his or her modesty issues from within**

Ephesians 5:17 Therefore do not be unwise, **but understand what the will of the Lord is.**

Hebrews 5:14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, **those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**

- C. **Consistent godliness rejects immodesty in all three forms:**
  - **Character**
  - **Conduct**
  - **Dress**
- D. **Outer appearance should reflect inward purity, modesty, fidelity, and chastity.**



**2. In our character, the Christian must progressively be "transformed."**

Romans 12:1-2 beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Colossians 3:1-2 **If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God**. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

**3. Changes in character will often result in changes in wardrobe.**  
**Ephesians 4:20-24**

